

Application No. 10/061,026
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claim 5 has been amended to clarify the features of the present invention whereby: (i) a print board for use in an image forming apparatus comprises an external connection connector having a common specification with an external connection connector of an additional print board used in the image forming apparatus, (ii) an external part life inspection apparatus is connectable to a memory device through the external connection connector to read out and clear the life information and to write and read out the number of times of reuse of the part, and (iii) the external part life inspection apparatus determines whether each part mounted on the print board can be supplied for reuse based on the life information and the number of times of reuse of the part, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at page 17, line 3 to page 20, line 11.

In addition, claim 1 has been amended to depend from claim 5, and claim 12 has been amended to depend from claim 10.

Still further, claims 1-8, 10 and 12-18 have been amended to make some minor grammatical improvements and to correct some

Application No. 10/061,026
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

minor antecedent basis problems so as to put the claims in better form for issuance in a U.S. patent.

And new claim 19 has been added depending from claim 12 to recite the feature of the present invention previously recited in the parenthetical expression in claim 12 whereby the second security code comprises a USE code.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 1-8, 9 and 10-18 and the addition of claim 19 be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 USC 102 or under 35 USC 103 as being anticipated by or obvious in view of USP 6,631,967 ("Saruta"); claims 8-16 and 18 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Saruta and US Application Publication No. 2001/0037462 A1 ("Bengston"); and claim 17 was rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Saruta, Bengston and USP 6,332,062 ("Phillips et al"). These rejections, however, are respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

According to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 5, a print board is provided in which the life information of a part which is mounted on the print board is stored in a memory device on the print board. The life

Application No. 10/061,026
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

information can be directly read from or written to the memory device by an external part life inspection apparatus through an external connection connector. The external connection connector has a common specification to an external connection connector provided on another print board used in the image forming apparatus. Therefore, the life information of each said print board used in the image forming apparatus can be read from and written to by the external part life inspection apparatus.

It is respectfully submitted that Saruta does not disclose, teach or suggest the above described features of the present invention whereby: (i) a print board for use in an image forming apparatus comprises an external connection connector having a common specification with an external connection connector of an additional print board used in the image forming apparatus, (ii) an external part life inspection apparatus is connectable to a memory device through the external connection connector to read out and clear the life information and to write and read out the number of times of reuse of the part, and (iii) the external part life inspection apparatus determines whether each part mounted on the print board can be supplied for reuse based on the life information and the number of times of reuse of the part, in the manner of the present invention as recited in claim 5.

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the ink information including a quantity of remaining ink which is stored

Application No. 10/061,026
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

according to Saruta corresponds to the memory device for storing life information of the present invention as recited in claim 5. It is respectfully submitted, however, that according to the present invention as recited in claim 5, the external part life inspection apparatus determines whether each part mounted on the print board can be supplied for reuse based on the life information and the number of times of reuse of the part. And it is respectfully submitted that information such as ink quantity does not at all correspond to the life information of the present invention, which determines whether a part can be supplied for reuse.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 5, and claims 1-4 and 6-19 depending therefrom, clearly patentably distinguishes over Saruta, taken singly or in combination with any of the other cited references, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

Application No. 10/061,026
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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